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ABSTRACT

The industrial production program is a regular education program which was designed to provide vocational training to handicapped students. The program incorporates individual programing, close supervision, small group instruction, and academic support in a skill based framework intended to produce specific occupational competencies in students who lack cognitive, psychomotor, and/or affective skills prerequisite to vocational instruction. The competency based program is aimed toward preparing the student for competitive employment and mainstreaming the student into the regular Area Vocational Technical School programs. Students receive academic support through an individualized resource center and participate in related services (such as speech and language therapy and occupational therapy consultation) as needed. Demographic information on students reveals a variety of handicapping conditions represented for years 1981-82 and 1982-83. The program maintains a lay advisory committee which guides the program's services for students. (CL)

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A MODEL FOR TRAINING SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS IN A REGULAR VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOL SETTING

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A MODEL FOR TRAINING SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS IN A REGULAR VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SETTING

The intent of PL94-142 is to provide an appropriate free education for all handicapped children. The underlying assumption is that the handicapped are entitled to equal access to knowledge, skills, and social institutions; an assumption shared by local education agencies (LEA's) in varying degrees. The dimensions of accessibility to public education are defined through policy decisions made by local boards of education. Who receives education; where, when, and how, are decisions made by LEA's which determine whether handicapped individuals have true access to practical knowledge, marketable skills, and social institutions, or merely the appearance thereof.

At its March, 1981 business meeting, the Joint Operating Committee of Central Montgomery County Area Vocational Technical School unanimously voted to implement a vocational preparation program which would accommodate special needs students in a regular vocational setting. This action on their part was a clear statement that the handicapped students of Central Montgomery County will have the same access to vocational education programs and facilities as do non-handicapped students. Furthermore, access would be provided within the context of a program funded with regular vocational education funds and designed to complement CMCAVTS' twenty-three other programs.

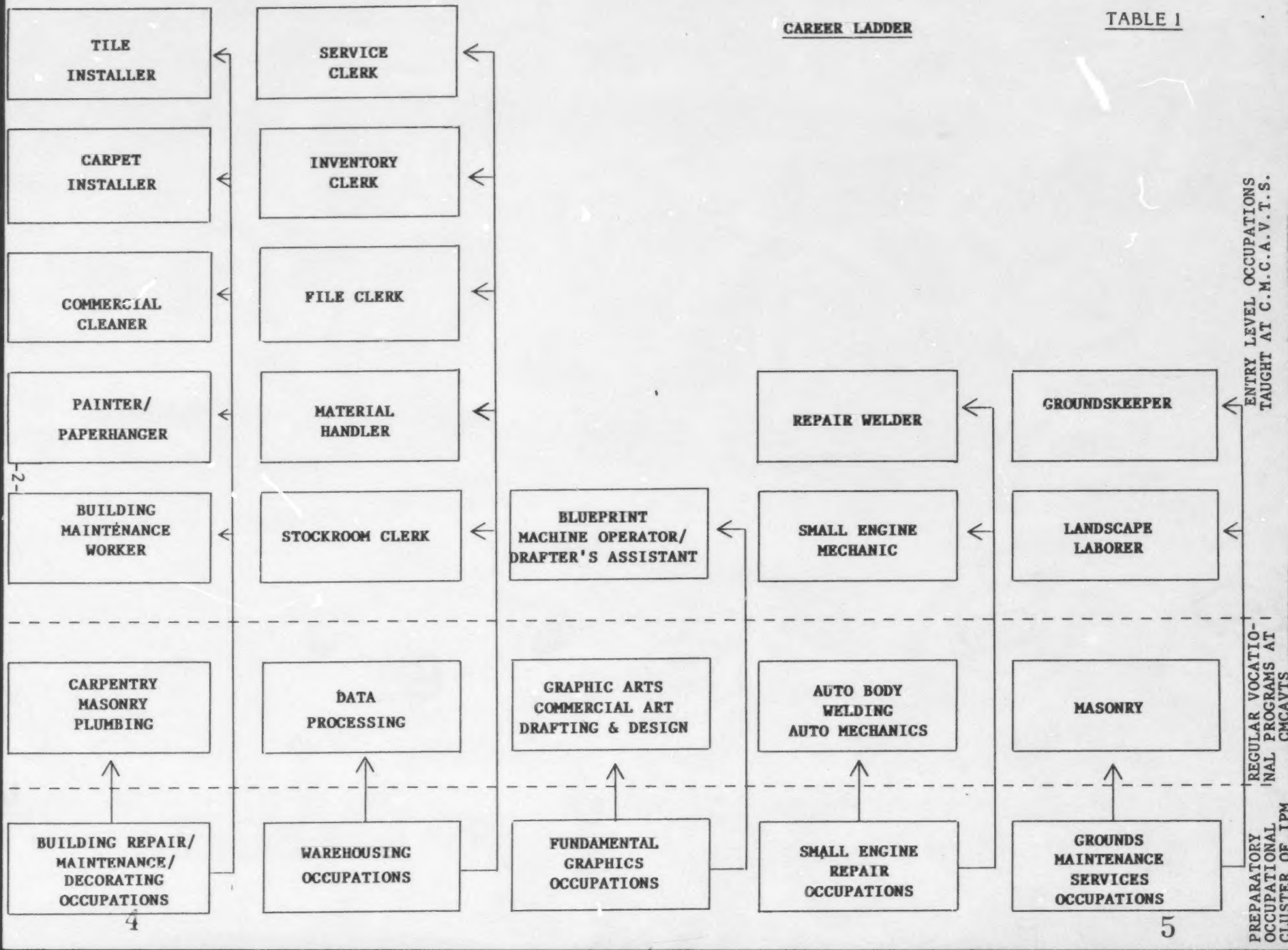
PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Industrial Production Program is a regular education program designed to provide vocational training to students whose learning characteristics require individual programming, close supervision, small group instruction, and academic support to vocational training. To varying degrees, IPM students lack the cognitive psychomotor, and/or affective skills which are pre-requisites to vocational instruction. Individual programming and instruction are skill based and lead to the development of specific occupational competencies in students.

The program, which incorporates a network of services based on the concept of goodness-of-fit between the student and the educational setting has several unique characteristics:

The objective of all training in Industrial Production is competitive employment. While it is hoped that every student will at some point be mainstreamed into one of the 23 other vocational shops at CMCAVTS, those who remain in Industrial Production will be prepared for work in a competitive setting (see Table 1). In addition to such factors as the students' interests and abilities, employment outlook and projected individual employability in a given field are considered when counselling students in their choice of individual clusters of occupations.

An important aspect of the Industrial Production Program is that the competency based curriculum is organized in the same way as other CMCAVTS programs. This assures curriculum continuity and precise placement when a student's skill development and occupational preference dictate a transfer into another shop. Students are encouraged to identify a regular shop as a goal, and choose occupations


CAREER LADDER
TABLE 1
TILE INSTALLER
SERVICE CLERK
CARPET INSTALLER
INVENTORY CLERK
COMMERCIAL CLEANER
FILE CLERK
PAINTER/ PAPERHANGER
MATERIAL HANDLER
REPAIR WELDER
GROUNDSKEEPER
BUILDING MAINTENANCE WORKER
STOCKROOM CLERK
BLUEPRINT MACHINE OPERATOR/ DRAFTER'S ASSISTANT
SMALL ENGINE MECHANIC
LANDSCAPE LABORER
ENTRY LEVEL OCCUPATIONS TAUGHT AT C.M.C.A.V.T.S.
CARPENTRY MASONRY PLUMBING
DATA PROCESSING
GRAPHIC ARTS COMMERCIAL ART DRAFTING & DESIGN
AUTO BODY WELDING AUTO MECHANICS
MASONRY
REGULAR VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS AT CMCAVTS
BUILDING REPAIR/ MAINTENANCE/ DECORATING OCCUPATIONS
WAREHOUSING OCCUPATIONS
FUNDAMENTAL GRAPHICS OCCUPATIONS
SMALL ENGINE REPAIR OCCUPATIONS
GROUNDS MAINTENANCE SERVICES OCCUPATIONS
PREPARATORY OCCUPATIONAL CLUSTER OF IPM

or clusters of occupations, which will prepare the student for the shop of his/her choice. Identifying a target shop is not, however, required.

Throughout the program, the student is trained within the context of the work world. To prepare students to handle the emerging awareness of the work world, which Industrial Production seeks to stimulate, a career development component comprises another unique aspect of the program. On a bi-weekly basis, students meet with the Job Placement Coordinators to discuss all aspects of initial employment: looking for a job, filling out forms and applications, interviewing, figuring weekly pay and other areas of student need are covered in these sessions. Industrial Production students are also eligible for the Capstone Program (Work Experience) as every other student in the school.

In addition to vocational training in Industrial Production shops, students receive academic support in the Resource Center which is a part of each shop. The Academic Program is individualized and is directly related to and supportive of vocational training. Individual progress and success is stressed in a non-competitive setting.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Historically, the member school districts have contracted with the Intermediate Unit to provide students with a wide variety of Special Education Programs, ranging from full time placement in an I.U. operated special class to itinerent support services. Itinerent services provided by the I.U. at the home schools frequently followed students to the AVTS. Thus, I.U. services frequently serve as a supplement to CMCAVTS' resource room support services.

Special needs students at CMCAVTS continue to receive a wide variety of support services from the I.U. These include Speech and Language Therapy, Hearing Therapy, Vision Therapy, and Occupational Therapy consultation.

CMCAVTS students who receive the academic portion of their program in an I.U. operated class are also eligible for special job placement services through the I.U.'s Project PRIDE.* Since PRIDE is designed to provide more structure and closer supervision of students placed on jobs than the AVTS students may be placed on jobs through PRIDE if their needs dictate. The PRIDE coordinator consults with the AVTS Job Placement personnel and the Coordinator of Special Needs to decide which eligible students will be placed on jobs through the PRIDE Program. The Coordinator of Special Needs at CMCAVTS is a member of the PRIDE Advisory Committee.

HISTORY OF PLACEMENT PROBLEMS

Prior to the development of the Industrial Production Program at CMCAVTS, special education students from I.U. classes were forced to compete within mainstream vocational areas with only intermittent resource help. Although this approach met least restrictive environment regulations, the toll of total mainstreaming was evident among special education students. The special education drop-out rate was extremely high for students from I.U. classes and many special education students, who may have become involved in a vocational technical school program, opted to remain full time in the home schools. For example, during the 1979-80

*PRIDE - A Program for reaching independence through discovery of employment.

school year, the Intermediate Unit Educable Mentally Retarded Program had 15 eligible students for vocational school placement. Of this number only 3 attended the AVTS and only 1 completed the year. This is in direct contrast to the 1982-83 statistics which show 17 eligible, 14 attending and no drop-outs from the program.

A continuous problem facing both vocational and special educators has been the appropriateness of vocational offerings within the traditional technical school environment. Prior to the development of the Industrial Production Program, special education students were exposed to curriculum designed to lead either into direct entry as a full time tradesman or into an apprenticeship program leading to journeyman status. For the majority of special education students, these were not viable options. The Industrial Production Program, however, provides reasonable alternatives for the special education student. Although the ultimate goal for each special education student is still the integration of that student into a regular vocational area, Industrial Production in itself is a fully accredited shop area which may lead to competitive employment upon the student's graduation. For the more severely involved student, Industrial Production may lead to employment in a helper's capacity.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Central Montgomery County AVTS currently has a student population of just under 1100 students. According to the current schedule, students attend two nine week full day sessions at the AVTS, alternating with two nine week full day sessions at the home school. Students are assigned to an "A" or "B" group, depending on their home school/AVTS rotation schedule.

Just under 150 special needs students attend CMCAVTS at this time. Most are mainstreamed into shops other than Industrial Production. They receive either direct or indirect (consultation) services from a special needs Resoure Teacher and/or any of the I.U. support services previously described. About one-third, however, are currently placed in the Industrial Production Program. Table 2 shows the breakdown of the Industrial Production Program by handicapping condition.

TABLE 2

INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION STUDENTS
BY
HANDICAPPING CONDITION

	1981-1982			1982-1983		
	A	B		A	B	
Learning Disabled	2	3		3	8	
Educable Mentally Retarded	10	8		21	7	
Trainable Mentally Retarded	0	4		0	4	
Physically Handicapped	0	2		1	3	
Physically Handicapped/ Learning Disabled	1	3		1	0	
Socially and Emotionally Disturbed	4	12		5	11	
Not Special Education	--	--		3	0	
Total	17	29	46	34	33	67*

*This number exceeds the enrollment number of 60 due to the programs open entry/open exit policy. Students are mainstreamed when they are ready, and new students are accepted to fill vacant slots.

TABLE 3 presents a summary of student access and mobility patterns.

TABLE 3

INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION PROGRAM SUMMARY
OF STUDENT ACCESS

	1981-1982			1982-1983*		
	A	B	Total	A	B	Total
Total Number Students	17	29	46	34	33	67
Students entering from other shops	1	2	3	5	0	5
Students mainstreamed for 1982-83 school year	3	5	8	5	4	9*/22**
Students graduated	2	1	3	undetermined at this time		
Students on Co-op	--	--	--	2	2	4
Students on visitation	--	--	--	1	5	6

* As of 4/1/83

** Planned

LAY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

As with all vocational programs at CMCAVTS, the Industrial Production Program maintains a Lay Advisory Committee. This committee is composed of craftsmen and professionals currently working in the occupational fields included in the Industrial Production curriculum. The Lay Advisory Committee also includes a Hearing Therapist, a Special Education Supervisor, and the Coordinator of the PRIDE employment Program. These three members are current I.U. staff members.

Also on the committee is a member whose function is to advise AVTS staff of the articulation of graduating students into county services when the students' needs dictate additional training past age twenty-one.

Although the committee meets twice a year to review the program in relation to current industrial practice, individual members are very active throughout the school year.

SUMMARY

The Industrial Production Program is an approved vocational program which provides training in a variety of occupational areas within the context of a regular AVTS curriculum. It is operated solely by the Joint Operating Committee of Central Montgomery County Area Vocational Technical School. The Montgomery County Intermediate Unit #23 provides adjunct services to students at CMCAVTS on an itinerent basis. Although the AVTS and I.U. programs are distinct, mutual cooperation has strengthened the delivery of services to special needs students at CMCAVTS and has enhanced the quality of programming students receive.

The Industrial Production Program has several unique characteristics which are of educational importance:

- -It provides guided mobility for students moving from special education to regular education settings.
- -Occupational clustering allows for individual programming based on student strengths and interests.
- -Vocational training/academic support plans provide instructional direction and address essential learning characteristics as they express themselves vocationally.
- -The reality based format and content of the program stimulate an awareness of the work world.
- -It provides access to regular vocational programs in a realistic and practical program model.